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ABSTRACT

This report, prepared for the Committee on Education of the Community Service Society of New York, describes a court-ordered program for pupils with English language difficulty. A total of forty elementary, junior high and high schools were identified and designated as pilot schools. These schools were to provide a complete bilingual program for all students who had been identified as needing the program within each school. The pilot schools were also to show school personnel throughout each borough the ways of developing, implementing, and operating the programs. Most of the bilingual educators interviewed were reluctant to make an estimate of how long it would take the program enrollees to develop sufficient English language skills to continue their education in an all-English class. Most of them favored a maintenance program (maintaining the first language while learning English) throughout the child's school career, rather than a transitional program (transition to an all-English class when English language proficiency permits). (Author/AM)

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ED135909

A study of a court-ordered program for pupils with English language difficulty

REPORT ON BILINGUAL PILOT SCHOOLS IN NEW YORK CITY

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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REPORT ON BILINGUAL PILOT SCHOOLS IN NEW YORK CITY

A STUDY OF A COURT-ORDERED PROGRAM FOR PUPILS WITH ENGLISH LANGUAGE DIFFICULTY

Prepared for the
Committee on Education
Department of Public Affairs

by

Esther Johnson

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Community Service Society of New York
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PREFACE

In June 1974, the Community Service Society issued a Report on Bilingual Education, the result of a year long study of programs for pupils with English language difficulties in New York City public schools.

The issue of bilingual education was of interest because of the Society's established commitment to the disadvantaged, specifically the economically deprived and those who suffer from discrimination.

Shortly after the issuance of this report and following a class action suit brought against the Board of Education in U.S. Federal District Court, Southern District of New York, by Aspira of New York, Inc., et al., on behalf of youngsters born in Puerto Rico or of parents recently arrived from there, Federal Judge Marvin E. Frankel signed a Consent Decree which required the Board of Education to implement a bilingual program along specific guidelines. As a first step in this implementation, the Board of Education was to designate pilot or model schools in which to begin a planned program in February 1975.

In view of the Consent Decree and the continuing interest of the Society in the affected school population, CSS devoted its efforts to monitoring the bilingual pilot programs in the spring of 1975.

This study was conducted for the Society by its Committee on Education, whose own members and staff, assisted by bilingual volunteers from other agencies, participated in the monitoring of the bilingual program in the Pilot Schools. In an orientation session for the monitoring teams, guidelines were formulated to serve as the basis for the observations. A questionnaire was also devised by CSS for use in interviews with staff of the Pilot Schools. (See Appendix A)

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CSS also extends its appreciation to the volunteers of other agencies who participated in the monitoring of the Pilot Schools:

Mrs. Ana Conigliaro, Public Education Association (PEA); Ms. Gladys Correa, Universidad Boricua; Mr. Hugo Garcia, Citizens Committee for Children; Ms. Gloria Quinones, Experimental and Bilingual Institute, Inc.; Ms. Rina Ramirez, Aspira of New York, Inc., and Dr. Paula Zajan, Eugenio Maria de Hostos Community College.

Also our deepest appreciation to all school personnel whose cooperation made this report possible.

BACKGROUND OF THE CONSENT DECREE

A class action which was commenced on September 20, 1972, by Puerto Rican and other Hispanic public school children, their parents, Aspira of New York, Inc., and Aspira of America, Inc., against the Board of Education of New York City, the Chancellor of the City School District and various community school district officials, was settled on August 29, 1974, by a Consent Decree signed by United States District Judge Marvin E. Frankel.

The group of children affected by the mandates in the Consent Decree are "all New York City public school children whose English language deficiency prevents them from effectively participating in the learning process and who can more effectively participate in Spanish."[1]

The decree mandates that "An improved method for accurately and systematically identifying and classifying children who are Spanish-speaking or Spanish-surnamed will be designed and implemented by the Board of Education."[2]

These children are required by the decree to receive: (1) a program designed to develop the child's ability to speak, understand, read and write the English language, (2) "substantive courses" or subject area instruction in Spanish (e.g., mathematics, science, and social studies), (3) a planned program "designed to reinforce and develop the child's use of Spanish," and to introduce reading comprehension in Spanish to children entering the school system whose reading readiness assessment indicates this need. In addition, provisions must be made to allow the children to "spend maximum time with other children so as to avoid isolation and segregation from their peers."[3]

In addition to other provisions, the decree also requires the Chancellor to identify a number of elementary, junior high and high schools as Pilot Schools to serve as models for the Program.

In February 1975, a total of forty elementary, junior high and high schools

were identified and designated as Pilot Schools. These schools were to provide a complete bilingual program for all students within each school who had been identified as needing the Program. Furthermore, the Pilot Schools were to serve the purpose of "among other things, demonstrating on a systematic basis to school personnel on a borough-wide level the means of developing, implementing, and operating the Program." They were also required by the decree to serve as training centers for appropriate school personnel in other schools.

The agreement calls for the Board of Education to fully implement the Program for all children in the described category by September 1975.

GOALS AND REQUIREMENTS OF A BILINGUAL PROGRAM

The research previously conducted by CSS, the mandates of the Consent Decree, and a Special Circular prepared by the Office of the Chancellor, Board of Education of the City of New York, defining minimum standards for the program described in the decree, provide a guide to understanding the goals and requirements of a bilingual program:

1. Provision of "a meaningful opportunity (for Hispanic children) to participate in the educational program (which) their lack of English might otherwise foreclose." [5]

2. Proper screening: In order to set up an effective program, valid testing instruments must be developed and administered properly so that children are appropriately placed.

3. Development of English language proficiency to enable children to "participate on an equal basis with English speaking students." [6]

"When a child is able to participate effectively in the learning process in English, as determined by an assessment of the child's language skills, the child is no longer required to receive this program. Further participation in a bilingual program may be considered as an educational option for a child who is no longer required to receive this program should the parent want a bilingual program for that child." [7]

4. Suitable bilingual curriculum materials: Books and materials must be appropriate to the curriculum, geared to the proper grade level, and relevant to the child's culture and experience. If there are no such tools available, their development is a primary objective.

5. Integration: Encouragement of effective interaction between English and non-English speaking children.

6. Parent participation: To involve Spanish-speaking parents in the education of their children.

7. Ongoing evaluation: In order to assess the results of different teaching methods and techniques for the purpose of improving the bilingual program.

With the conviction that an effective bilingual program would meet these requirements, CSS began its monitoring of the first stage in the implementation of the Consent Decree.

MAJOR FINDINGS

1. An atmosphere of excitement and enthusiasm permeated most of the Pilot Schools. The bilingual staffs are dedicated and committed to the Program. The comfortable relationship between students and teachers who understand and speak their language has had a positive impact on the students, who seem interested, are attentive, and take pride in their accomplishments.

2. Teachers were actively involved in curriculum planning, in searching out and creating instructional materials appropriate to the program, and in sharing experiences at workshops conducted after school which they attended voluntarily. Teachers also involved parents in these activities.

3. Most of the teachers in the Program had a good command of both English and Spanish.

4. In the majority of the schools, instruction in social studies, mathematics and natural science was conducted in Spanish. One school conducted all classes in English, and others utilized both languages.

5. English language instruction was the weakest component in the programs of most of the schools visited. Little effort was made to develop conversational skills or the ability to conceptualize in English, and there was no evidence of any program designed to accommodate different levels of linguistic competence among the pupils.

6. Spanish language instruction was well planned and executed. In one school the utilization of a Spanish Language Laboratory was credited with having greatly improved the English reading achievement of students using the laboratory.

7. A bicultural component was included in the program in all of the Pilot Schools. Some integrated this into the regular curriculum, while in other schools the cultural component was limited to flag displays or celebrations of

holidays.

8. Though the Pilot Schools stated that integration of bilingual children with others was promoted through a variety of activities, observers reported a pattern of segregation in the schools visited. To some degree this was due to the absence in many of the Pilot Schools of any significant number of students of other ethnic groups who are English-dominant.

9. In almost all instances the Pilot Schools selected were schools which were already engaged in providing bilingual education through Federal and/or State-funded programs. As such, they did not serve as models to demonstrate the step-by-step development of a new program.

10. Additional tax levy funds of as much as $35,000 per Pilot School were, in most instances, used to enrich these programs through acquisition of additional curricular materials, and to improve services through employment of additional resource personnel and paraprofessional staff.

11. Tests designed for the selection of the target population and administered in October 1974 were deemed invalid for measuring what was intended; the subjective judgments of teachers were therefore more generally used for this purpose in the Pilot Schools. New tests were thereafter developed and administered in the late spring for identification of students for the September 1975 term, but these tests were also criticized as inadequate instruments by the bilingual teachers.

12. A critical need exists for Spanish language texts appropriate to the target population in the City schools, particularly in social studies and in reading.

13. Initial parental apprehension or opposition to bilingual education was reported to have been encountered in a small number of the schools visited. This

was overcome through workshops and the opportunity to observe the program in operation.

14. Most of the bilingual educators interviewed were reluctant to make any estimate of how long it might take the children in the program to develop sufficient English language skills to continue their education in an all-English class. Most favored a "maintenance" program (maintaining the first language while learning English) throughout the child's school career, rather than a "transitional" program (transition to an all-English class when English language proficiency permits).

RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the overall goals of bilingual education and the Board of Education's acknowledgement of its responsibility to provide programs in which both English-speaking and non English-speaking children "can effectively participate and learn," the Community Service Society recommends the following:

1. Curriculum Development. The Board of Education's Division of Educational Planning and Support should design a curriculum guide for bilingual teachers which will deal with the sequence of language skills which need to be developed in both Spanish and English for the majority of Hispanic children who may speak both languages but are not proficient in either.

It is not enough to provide program guides which do no more than suggest a daily schedule of a given number of periods, or number of minutes, to be devoted to English as a Second Language or Spanish Language Arts. This is meaningless as an "Instructional Program Design."

2. Drafting and Dissemination of a Syllabus: The goals and objectives of the Program should be stated in a clear and precise manner; and methods and techniques which might be followed to achieve those goals should be suggested. It is essential that there be guidelines regarding how long the Program will run, taking into account the age, grade and linguistic ability of the children for whom the Program is provided. A planned sequence of instruction to enable the pupils to acquire the skills they need as quickly as possible is imperative. This would facilitate the implementation of a new program and minimize the high cost of duplication of planning and development efforts among the various school districts.

3. Integration: A more intensive effort should be made to provide opportuni-

ties for the pupils in the Program to participate in school activities with English-dominant pupils to encourage them to speak English in a non-threatening environment (gym, music, art, assembly, etc.). Speaking is an essential part of language development. Hearing and speaking English should not be limited to 45 minutes of practice drills per day.

4. Improvement of Test Instruments: Instruments used to identify the target population should test the child's verbal communication skills, as well as reading and writing ability in English and Spanish. Such a test should not rely on one word responses, but should encourage conversational responses to permit a more valid assessment of the child's language ability.

5. Accelerated Recruitment and Training of Bilingual Teachers: While the Bilingual Pupil Services Program is reported to have licensed and placed 350 bilingual teachers in the past two and a half years, the need as measured by the target population is for 3,000 such teachers.

6. Program Evaluation: It is the responsibility of the Board of Education to provide for citywide program evaluation annually. Such evaluation should be conducted by an outside independent agency in order to assure maximum objectivity in determining whether:

(a) goals and objectives are realistic, and to what extent they are being achieved.

(b) educational standards are being maintained.

(c) program implementation is in accord with mandates of the Consent Decree.

7. The Board of Education should further:

(a) provide in-service training for all personnel involved in the implementation of the Program.

(b) grant necessary resources and technical assistance to community school districts in the initial stages of program implementation.

(c) encourage textbook publishers to develop curriculum materials appropriate to the program of bilingual education.

SELECTION OF PILOT SCHOOLS

The CSS monitoring teams visited seventeen of the forty designated Pilot Schools, located in Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens and the Bronx. The number of pupils served in the pilot program in these seventeen schools totaled 4280, ranging from 90 to 675 per school.

From this sample it appeared that most of the schools identified and chosen to function as Pilot Schools had been operating bilingual programs prior to the spring of 1975, with funds received under Title I and/or Title VII of the Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act. A few of these schools had also received state aid funds earmarked for bilingual education. Only two of these seventeen schools had actually commenced their program in February 1975.

Because CSS was interested in the procedure by which schools were selected for the pilot program, each principal and program coordinator was asked what criteria had been used in the selection. Slightly under 50 percent responded that they had been asked to submit a written proposal and were later notified that they had been chosen. They did not know what standards were used in making the determination. The other responses varied and included the following: the schools had a large proportion of Hispanic students; schools had five or more years of experience with bilingual programs; the principal volunteered his school as a pilot; and one school was directed by the District Office to serve as a pilot.

Personnel in some of the schools visited complained that although their proposal had been accepted, there was a long delay before they were so advised. These school officials attributed the delay to a lack of

interest in bilingual education at the district level. Such lack of support from the district offices was a matter of serious concern to principals in several of the schools visited.

Seeking further clarification about the method of selecting Pilot Schools, CSS spoke with an official at the Board of Education's Office of Bilingual Education. He stated that all elementary and junior high schools in each district were to have been notified by the Community School Board to submit proposals, regardless of the number of Hispanic children on register. High schools were notified through the Central Office of the Board of Education. The final decision in the selection, he said, was made between the appropriate School Superintendent and the Chancellor.

The official confirmed that the Pilot Schools were chosen for the purpose of serving as models for developing bilingual programs in their respective districts. CSS then asked why schools with long-established bilingual or English as a Second Language (ESL) programs were chosen as "pilots". He responded that it was not economically feasible for the Board of Education to initiate a new program in schools that did not already have a bilingual component in their curriculum. When asked if supplementary funds were to be allotted to those schools starting their bilingual program next September to make it "economically feasible", he responded that no one seemed to have a clear idea of what would occur in September.

It appears that two major factors considered in the selection of the "pilots" were cost and previous experience with bilingual education.

Among the schools visited only two had not had a bilingual or ESL program prior to their designation as Pilot Schools. Both were high schools -- one in Brooklyn and one in the Bronx. CSS was told that the Brooklyn school was selected because of its high Hispanic enrollment (51% of the 2000 students enrolled are Spanish-speaking or Spanish-surnamed, of whom more than half are in need of a bilingual program). A similar situation prevailed at the Bronx school.

FUNDING OF THE PILOT SCHOOLS

Special funding was provided to the Pilot Schools. Several of the Bilingual Coordinators in these schools stated that they had been under the impression that each school was to receive $35,000 for the implementation of the Program. However, an official in the Office of Bilingual Education stated to CSS that the amount given to each school was determined by the "needs of the school", that some received less than $35,000 and none more than that.

Utilization of Funds

The funds received by the Pilot Schools have been used in a variety of ways. Some schools have used them to expand their already functioning bilingual programs in order to accommodate more children in need of this service. The new classes opened with these funds were generally referred to as "The Aspira Classes" because the moneys were a direct result of the suit initated by Aspira.

In other schools, where administrative staff saw no need to add classes, they used the funds to acquire additional curricular materials

needed for the existing classes. They used most of their funds to purchase textbooks, to expand the reading and mathematics laboratories by adding personnel and equipment, and to enrich their school libraries with books written in Spanish.

One of the schools visited was primarily concerned with curriculum development. It used its funds to acquire the services of a curriculum specialist, who, working with the bilingual teachers in the school, developed a complete series of curriculum materials in the areas of: (a) Spanish reading, designed to develop students' reading skills, (b) Spanish language curriculum for reinforcement and development of students' dominant language, (c) Hispanic history and culture, and (d) English as a Second Language. Additional curriculum materials were developed for social studies, science and mathematics, covering all elementary grade levels. CSS was told that this material would be disseminated throughout the district to be used by bilingual teachers in other schools, some of whom participated in the curriculum workshops held in the Pilot School twice a week.

Many schools have enriched their bilingual program by adding services, such as those produced by a resource teacher who develops curriculum materials at all levels of the program; bilingual educational assistants who work closely with the classroom teachers; and paraprofessionals who are usually utilized for small group instruction. Two of the schools visited each hired a bilingual guidance counselor. School officials in these schools found that the bilingual guidance counselor helped improve communication and understanding among parents, administrators and students. They have noted a marked improvement in the parent-school relationship.

SELECTION OF STUDENTS FOR THE PILOT PROGRAM

To determine how students were selected for the pilot program, CSS monitoring teams asked the bilingual personnel in the schools whether the students had been tested for English language proficiency. All answered yes. The same question about testing for Spanish language proficiency produced only one negative response; the rest all said yes. Regarding testing to assess subject area proficiency in English and/or Spanish, responses were equally divided between yes and no.

The Consent Decree required that "an improved method of accurately and systematically identifying and classifying children who are Spanish-speaking or Spanish-surnamed," for placement in bilingual classes, be designed and implemented by October 1, 1974. A testing instrument was designed and administered in October 1974. However, according to teachers who used the test, the instructions were unclear, the pictures which the children were to identify were not discernible, and the test did not measure what was intended. Because this test failed to identify children according to their ability to speak, read, write or comprehend English and Spanish, the Board of Education discarded it.

Since the test was invalidated, the criterion used for selection was, in most cases, a subjective determination by teachers of the child's English language deficiency. Students thus "identified" were then informally "tested" by their teachers to determine their ability to read in Spanish. For this purpose the student was asked to read a chapter in a Spanish language book (at grade level).

Two of the schools visited had designed their pilot differently than the others and selected both English-dominant and Spanish-dominant children for the Program. In each of these schools two "paired" classes were established at the same grade level, one for the Spanish-dominant students and another for the Spanish-surnamed children who are English-dominant.

In each class students were assigned to teachers whose dominant language was the same as their own; at a given time of the day they exchanged classes. For forty-five minutes daily, the Spanish-speaking, bilingual teacher taught the group of English-dominant students Spanish as a Second Language (SSL), and the English-dominant teacher provided English language instruction to the Spanish-dominant students.

In order to identify students who, under the court decree, would receive the bilingual program in the fall of 1975, new tests to assess language ability in English and Spanish were developed and administered in the spring of this year. These will be discussed later in the report.

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM IN THE PILOT SCHOOLS

Subject Matter Instruction

Social studies, mathematics, and natural science instruction was conducted in Spanish in most of the schools visited. However, one of the problems facing teachers in these subject areas is the paucity of appropriate curriculum materials. Teachers and their aides spent much time culling from available textbooks and developing supplementary materials in Spanish for these classes. This was particularly true in social studies. Textbooks produced in Spain, Puerto Rico or South America are not relevant to the social studies curriculum in the United States.

Despite these problems, most classes observed by the CSS teams reflected careful planning and the topics were well presented and developed. In natural science, for example, children were observed planting seeds and caring for small animals. Such activity-centered learning seemed to capture their imagination and sustain their interest, as the growth and development of plants and animals were discussed.

More frequently, though, traditional methodology was observed. A formal presentation was followed by a question and answer period led by the teacher to reinforce learning.

In 35 percent of the schools, it was reported that both English and Spanish were utilized for instruction in mathematics; in 28 percent of the schools, both languages were used to teach science; and in 21 percent of the schools, social studies classes were conducted in both languages.

In one school all instruction was in English.

In the secondary schools several teachers expressed dismay that their students had not received an adequate academic education prior to entering high school. Though Spanish-dominant, the students' previous experience in the lower grades had been in monolingual English classes where they did not understand the instruction. A high school mathematics teacher who was interviewed stated that, as a result, he spent much of his non-teaching time simplifying the presentation of the topic to be discussed in the class.

English Language Instruction

In most of the schools visited, English language instruction was conducted through English as a Second Language (ESL) classes.

These classes were usually scheduled for one 45 minute period daily. One of the schools was providing two periods of ESL, one of 40 minutes in the morning and another 45 minutes in the afternoon; another school reported three 40 minute periods daily of ESL: and a third assigned 75 minutes to ESL.

English as a Second Language appeared to be an extremely weak component in the Pilot Schools. The most frequently used method of teaching was group instruction relying on repetition of English words and phrases and providing no opportunity for pupils to develop conversational skills or the ability to conceptualize in English.

In many instances students in the class who were obviously able to communicate in English were nonetheless limited to the same form of instruction as the non-English speaking students, repeating in unison familiar vocabulary and simple sentences. Instruction in most schools was not designed to accommodate different levels of linguistic competence among the pupils.

In only two of the schools visited was the CSS team able to observe English language instruction which was not solely dependent on rote and memorization. Instruction was directed to the development of vocabulary through employing newly acquired words in their proper context.

Spanish Language Development

Spanish-speaking observers on the CSS monitoring teams noted that Spanish language instruction in grammatical structure, punctuation, reading and comprehension was well-planned and executed.

In general, the schools reported that 45 minutes daily were devoted to Spanish language instruction.

The CSS team observed displays of children's poetry and stories about their native countries. Teachers in some schools had developed a Language Experience Reading Program utilizing children's work--drawings, stories and poetry--which was organized in book form and used in the classroom for supplementary reading. When students' creativity was tapped to develop stories from their own experiences, teachers reported improved student interest and participation in the reading process.

One of the schools visited in the Bronx had set up a Spanish Language Laboratory with funds received for the pilot project. It was used by those students who were experiencing reading difficulty in both Spanish and English.

The laboratory teacher, who is bilingual, worked with two bilingual paraprofessionals and the classroom teachers in developing a curriculum designed to help students overcome their reading handicap, which she contended was often the result of language interference and the inability to establish phonic differentiations in the two languages. The emphasis was placed on vowel sounds in Spanish and a review of correlating sounds in English.

It was claimed that as a result of this intensive program the English reading ability of the students using the laboratory showed a marked improvement. The school reported that the reading scores of a bilingual fifth grade class had increased 47 percent in one year, measured by the City-wide Reading Achievement Test administered in 1974 and 1975. This group had previously attended monolingual English classes through the fourth grade and had experienced serious academic difficulties. It was stated that the laboratory was also used for remedial instruction in other areas of the curriculum, e.g., mathematics, science, etc.

Cultural Component

In response to a question as to whether a bicultural component was included in the curriculum, all of the schools said yes. As to how it was incorporated in the curriculum, five said through social studies (or history), three through language arts, and the others varied widely, including the following: art, music, customs, filmstrips, Hispanic culture period, ethnic studies, displays of flags of different countries, and reading of Spanish poems and plays.

One of the schools has developed a program in ethnic studies, which includes the various Hispanic cultures, and is highlighted in arts and crafts. The children designed a variety of papier-mâché artifacts which were characteristic of the Hispanic life-style. Another school held an art fair in which much of the children's work portrayed various aspects of Hispanic culture.

In another school a study of the Tainos was undertaken. Students explored the culture of the "aborigines", made masks and drew pictures of the various aspects of this Caribbean Indian culture.

STAFFING OF THE PILOT SCHOOLS

The Pilot Schools were staffed in most instances by bilingual teachers who were native speakers of Spanish. They also included in some instances English-dominant teachers who were fluent in Spanish. Others less fluent were usually assisted by bilingual professional assistants (BPA). The BPA's work with small groups of children, providing content area instruction in Spanish. In all but one of the schools visited, there were also bilingual paraprofessionals on staff.

Responses of the monitoring teams to a question about the quality of Spanish spoken by the teacher indicated most were considered "excellent", with a few rated "good". A similar question about the quality of English spoken by teachers who were not native speakers of English elicited responses which rated three good, one poor and the majority excellent.

However, in one Brooklyn school a very different staffing pattern was observed. The school already had a bilingual program which was well-organized and staffed with well-trained bilingual teachers. Two new classes were opened for the Pilot Program to which only English-dominant teachers who had a very limited knowledge of Spanish were assigned. There were no bilingual BPA's, paraprofessionals, or other bilingual personnel assisting in these classes.

The CSS monitoring team asked why the pilot classes in this school were staffed by teachers who exhibited very limited Spanish-speaking ability, and why, under these circumstances, there were no Spanish-speaking paraprofessionals in the classes. The bilingual coordinator stated that the two teachers would have lost their positions at the school if not so assigned and that the services of paraprofessionals had been denied by the Community School District Office. The coordinator further stated that the Hispanic parents in the school had protested to the Community School Board and were demanding the services of paraprofessionals for the pilot program.

A question was asked in each of the schools visited whether English language instruction was given by an ESL teacher. The vast majority responded in the affirmative.

Observers on the monitoring teams also noted that assistance to the pilot program was provided by a variety of other sources. Many of the schools visited had the services of student teachers from various colleges in the metropolitan area. In addition, Community School Districts may request assignment of Bilingual Teacher Interns from the Bilingual Pupil Services Office of the Board of Education. These interns are enrolled in Master's degree programs. The Bilingual Teacher Intern receives a substitute license effective for one year, is employed by the Community School District on a per annum basis and before termination of the special license is expected to take the Regular Bilingual Common Branches License Examination. Their duties and responsibilities are the same as regularly licensed teachers.

In the schools visited, many of the paraprofessionals were also engaged in career ladder programs preparing to become bilingual teachers. Among the categories of such bilingual personnel are Bilingual Teacher Assistants, who have from 60-90 college credits; Bilingual Teacher Associates (with more than 90 credits and at least one year of teaching experience); and the

Bilingual Professional Assistants, who already possess a Bachelor's degree but do not have educational credits. Many licensed teachers in the pilot program were also doing postgraduate work in the area of bilingual education at City University, Long Island University and Fordham University.

In addition, all of the schools claimed to have a staff development program. Staff training was provided through various means including: after-school workshops led by bilingual resource teachers, weekly in-service training seminars conducted by the bilingual coordinator and master teachers, district-wide workshops conducted monthly, and Project BEST (Bilingual Education Skills Training) at Hunter College.

Student-Teacher Ratio

While the average class size in most schools was approximately thirty children, staffing permitted a ratio of about fifteen pupils to one adult. In most cases classes were divided into small groups for more individualized instruction. In all schools visited, observers were told that paraprofessionals employed in the pilot program were assigned to teach in Spanish for part of the instructional time. Most of the responses indicated that they provided "individual" help or worked with groups of eight to ten. In one high school it was stated that on occasion the paraprofessional had responsibility for the full class.

INTEGRATION OF STUDENTS

It is stipulated in the decree that students receiving instruction in the bilingual program "...will spend maximum time with other children so as to avoid isolation and segregation from their peers." Many of the schools visited stated that they promoted integration of students through a variety of activities ranging from music and art to assembly exercises, lunch periods, trips, play periods and gym. One school scheduled club activity one afternoon

a week for the entire school. Children were free to attend any activity they wished. The options were leather crafts, sewing, ceramics, woodworking and others.

Of the various activities, the monitoring teams only had occasional opportunities to observe children in assembly, lunch and gym periods. In each such circumstance, though, there was total segregation. In the lunchrooms the children appeared segregated by class group and ethnic identity. Whether this represented self-segregation or a systematic grouping was not determined. An assembly period which was observed was attended only by bilingual children. The gym classes which were seen were no different. All the Spanish-speaking students were attending gym class together because entire homeroom classes were scheduled in that way.

In many schools with large Hispanic enrollments, the absence of any significant number of students of other ethnic groups who are English-dominant makes integration impossible.

STUDENT-TEACHER RELATIONS

A good relationship between students and teachers was observed in the schools visited. An atmosphere of trust and mutual respect prevailed. Teachers said that students had developed a good self-concept since they were in the bilingual program.

The CSS teams, where possible, interviewed students in order to find out their views about the program and their participation in it. They were all enthusiastic. Comments included: "For the first time I really feel like attending school," "I feel I belong," "If I don't understand something, I am not embarrassed to ask." One high school student said that prior to her attending school in a bilingual setting, she would "cut" most of her classes because she did not understand "what the teacher was talking about." She

felt that in the bilingual setting she was not "looked-down" upon by teachers and peers.

Most of the teachers interviewed stated that they expected and demanded a high level of performance and that the students were responsive. They also said that there was a marked improvement in the students' academic achievement. The monitoring teams observed that students were attentive and there was good class participation.

Teachers, professional assistants and paraprofessionals stated that they worked very closely with the students to assess their academic needs and to develop a program which was best suited to them.

CURRICULUM MATERIALS

Regarding the quality of material utilized in the bilingual classrooms, 60 percent of the teachers judged the materials to be either good or excellent. Most used both commercially prepared and teacher-prepared materials. All but one school indicated a sufficient number of texts and materials for all pupils and all either had adequately supplied libraries or were in the process of obtaining them.

In other instances, principals, program coordinators and teachers expressed their dissatisfaction with the material available for use in the bilingual programs. Most of the textbooks are printed in Spain or South America. They are geared to an educational system in which the Spanish language is the medium of communication for all. They are designed sequentially for the child who enters in the early grades and pursues his education without a language conflict. Therefore the vocabulary in these books reflects a higher level of language proficiency than that of the average Hispanic child in New York City schools.

Although the New York Hispanic pupils generally live in a Spanish-speaking environment, they are not necessarily literate in Spanish. For many such children the above-mentioned materials are inappropriate and too advanced.

Some materials in use in the Pilot Schools were developed in the southwest and are based on the Mexican-American culture and experience, and utilize idiomatic expressions which are alien to the Hispanic child in New York. Also used in many schools are materials which are printed and published in Puerto Rico for use in the public schools there. Although a high percentage of the Hispanic school population in the New York City public school system is of Puerto Rican descent, the stories depicted in these textbooks generally have a rural setting which teachers claim is not relevant to the city child.

There is a paucity of appropriate textbooks in Spanish published in the United States.

Bilingual educators cite a need for reading materials which reflect the urban child's experience, particularly in the Hispanic community. The Consent Decree states: "Materials used in the Program shall avoid negative stereotypes of members of any ethnic or racial group, and, shall positively reflect, where appropriate, the culture of the children within the Program."[8] A professional on the staff of the Board of Education's Bilingual Resource Center reported that publishers here are becoming increasingly interested in developing material for bilingual education, but await assurance of an expanded market before investing heavily in this effort.

Some Community School Districts were said to have obtained Federal funding to develop their own instructional material. Many of the Pilot Schools visited had used funds received for the pilot project to develop such materials which will be disseminated throughout the district. One of the schools had assigned $20,000 of its appropriation for this purpose.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Personnel in most schools stated that they had the full support of parents for the bilingual program. In one-fourth of the schools visited some parents were reported to have expressed opposition to the enrollment of their children in the bilingual program. Among the reasons given were fears that the children would not learn English, would be "held back" academically or would be stigmatized. Although all but one of the Pilot Schools visited reported that parents had been advised of the plans and goals of the Program, staff reported that the opposition encountered was generally the result of misconceptions about bilingual education. They said that when parents were able to observe the program offered to Hispanic children, many changed their minds and favored having their children participate in the Program.

The monitoring teams had opportunity to interview some parents in a few of the schools. These parents confirmed they had been apprehensive about bilingual education, fearing that educational standards in the bilingual program would not be comparable to those established for English-speaking children. However, through the parent workshops they began to understand the advantages of bilingual education. They all stated that they were extremely pleased with their childrens' progress.

All schools visited reported that they had developed programs through which parents participated in school activities. In a few of the schools this was accomplished through involving parents in curriculum planning and development; in others, parents served on committees for material evaluation and selection. In 70 percent of the schools, parents were said to serve as volunteers in the classrooms. Other forms of parent participation which were mentioned included: parents advisory councils, parent workshops,

class parent meetings, service as volunteers for assemblies and field trips, and, in one school, raising funds for library acquisitions.

TIME LIMIT FOR BILINGUAL INSTRUCTION

The Board of Education has stated in a "Special Circular" from the Office of the Chancellor, dated July 21, 1975: "When a child is able to participate effectively in the learning process in English, as determined by an assessment of the child's language skills, the child is no longer required to receive the Program. Further participation in a bilingual program may be considered as an educational option for a child who is no longer required to receive this program should the parent want a bilingual program for that child."

CSS's position was stated in its "Report on Bilingual Education." CSS advocates bilingual programs which: "...develop in the child proficiency in English language skills at the same time he is provided with academic instruction in his native language and in English. When the child has mastered English to the extent that he can participate on an equal basis with English-speaking students, he should be transferred to classes instructed in English."

CSS also endorsed bilingual education legislation which included a provision to enable students "in a grade of an intermediate or secondary school who wish to pursue further study in a language other than English," to have such courses available.

Present state law limits bilingual instruction to three years. It may be extended up to six years for individual pupils, if application by school authorities is approved by the State Commissioner of Education.[9]

In interviews with bilingual personnel in the pilot schools, the question was raised as to how long it was anticipated that students would remain in the bilingual program. Of responses received in eleven of the 17

schools visited, six said "throughout the school years," two answered "until the child achieves English language proficiency" and others were uncertain. The majority favored a "maintenance" program, in which children remain in a bilingual program, receiving instruction in both Spanish and English throughout their school career.

The bilingual programs are of such recent origin that bilingual educators are reluctant to make any estimate of how long it might take such children to develop sufficient English language skills in order to continue their academic development and social adjustment in an all-English class.

EXTENDING THE PILOT PROGRAM TO SYSTEM-WIDE BILINGUAL EDUCATION

Testing for Identification of Students Who Will Receive the Program in 1975-'76

Following the abandonment of the testing instrument used in October of 1974 to identify students to be served in bilingual programs, a new test, called the "Language Assessment Battery" (L.A.B.) - English version, was formulated by the Office of Educational Evaluation of the Board of Education. The test was initially given to a sample population of English-speaking students whose performance was scored and who served as the "norming" group. CSS was told by an official at the Office of Bilingual Education that the L.A.B. test was then given in mid-May to all children in the public school system who were not native speakers of English, including the Spanish-speaking and Spanish-surnamed children.

This test was to determine, among other things, which group of Hispanic children should receive bilingual instruction at the start of the next school year.

Bilingual teachers and coordinators who administered the test complained to the monitoring teams that it was "inadequate as an instrument to measure

language proficiency." They also expressed concern about the design of the test for grades K-2; in their opinion, it tested a child's ability to recognize and identify objects rather than measuring the child's ability to converse in English. Many of the school personnel also complained that they were not adequately instructed in the testing procedures. They stated that they had attended an orientation session in their respective Community School Districts the day before the test. In their view these sessions were conducted by inadequately trained personnel who had received their orientation at a general meeting held at Board of Education headquarters, but were themselves unclear about instructions for administering the test.

The tests for grade levels 3 - 12 were to be group administered, except for the speaking test (to be individually administered). In the lower grades, K-2, all of the tests were to be individually administered. However, CSS was informed by school personnel that because of the limited time available, the testing was frequently done in small groups even in the lower grades. Since responses were oral, it was unclear how much influence one child's response might have had on the others in the group.

A Spanish version of the L.A.B. was also designed. Teachers told CSS that kindergarten students taking this test were required to demonstrate reading skills on portions of the test, and that many students in the other elementary grades refused to take the test because they could not read in Spanish.

A major area of controversy was the question of what group of Hispanic children would be required to take the Spanish version of the L.A.B. The Board of Education decided that this test would be given only to Hispanic pupils whose scores on the English L.A.B. fell below the bottom 10% of the distribution of scores of the English-speaking "norming group". It was intended that students who scored higher on the Spanish version would be accommodated in the bilingual program.

However, the Board of Education changed its position and decided that not all such students should participate in the bilingual program. Instead, it would have excluded those students whose scores in Spanish, as well as their scores in English, fell below the bottom 10% of the "norming group". Such students, considered unable to participate effectively in either language by these standards, would have been placed in an English-speaking class.

On the other hand, Aspira pressed for testing all Hispanic children in Spanish to determine whether they functioned better in Spanish, even if they scored high in English. In their view, all such students should be placed in a bilingual program.

The divergent points of view brought both parties back into court for a resolution. Both views were rejected. The court noted that: "...the decree is not meant to enroll for bilingual instruction all who are more fluent in Spanish than in English. The setting and the goal remain a course of English-language instruction."[10]

However, the court also did not accept the Board of Education's contention that the cutoff point be at 10% for establishing whether a student could function more effectively in English. The court stated that it was more reasonable to set 20% as the cutoff for scores in the English L.A.B. It required that those students scoring below the 20th percentile in English be given the Spanish L.A.B. Furthermore, students who scored below the 20th percentile in both languages would have their scores compared and if they had a higher score in Spanish, they were to be placed in the bilingual program.

The court acknowledged that these decisions were based on "unscientific assumptions," but they were the most acceptable compromise "the parties and the court have been able to evolve" at the present time for a program which is to start in September 1975.[11]

Using the 20th percentile as the cutoff point in scores on the English L.A.B., it was determined by the Board of Education's Office of Education Evaluation that 101,792 children should be tested in the Spanish version L.A.B. Of this group of children, 89,000 are in the elementary and junior high schools and in excess of 12,000 are in high schools. The results of the Spanish L.A.B. testing have not been published.

As of the end of June, no information was available regarding the actual number of pupils who would be eligible for bilingual classes in September 1975.

Question of "Compulsory Participation" Clarified by the Court

During the course of the pilot program in the spring of 1975, papers were filed in Federal Court on behalf of "objecting Hispanic parents" who wanted their children excluded from the bilingual program. The court ruled that the Consent Decree awarded "Hispanic parents and children certain 'rights'--to a program of bilingual education. It imposed no duties upon (them) to 'enjoy' those rights...the rights given by the decree do not compel Spanish-speaking parents to enroll their children in the court-ordered program."[12]

In leaving parents free to choose, the court cited other court decisions regarding education and constitutional law and further referred to a recommendation made in Community Service Society's previously published "Report on Bilingual Education":

> "Participation in bilingual programs should be voluntary and require written permission of the parent. It is the responsibility of local schools to explain the purpose of bilingual instruction to parents and to provide for parent participation in the implementation of the program."[13]

The court order further states:

"Balancing the concerns for freedom and for effective teaching of the affected students, defendant Board has prepared forms of notice for school administrators and letters to Hispanic parents which are intended (a) to inform concerned people of the program and (b) to permit 'opting out' while refraining from encouraging it. The tone and content of these communications are meant to give the educators' best, if not certain, judgment while leaving the choice of educational opportunities for the parents."[14]

The letter prepared by the Board of Education for mailing to parents (in both English and Spanish) is reproduced in Appendix B.

Are the Pilots Models?

The majority of schools which will have to implement the "Program" in September of 1975 will not have had the background and extensive experience of the "Pilots", nor are they likely to have the sources of funding or staff and materials which the "Pilots" had.

If the Pilot Schools had initiated the Program in the period from February to June of 1975, they might have served as models for the newly emerging programs, because they would have met the purpose described in the decree of "demonstrating on a systematic basis to school personnel on a borough-wide level the means of developing, implementing, and operating the Program."

These schools, over the years, had already overcome the difficulties encountered in the planning stages and early implementation of a bilingual program. It therefore appears unlikely that schools which have never before provided bilingual education will have any easy model to follow.

However, some things have been learned which can be utilized, as in curriculum development, staff training, and parent involvement. A great deal more needs to be done to strengthen the English language instructional program.

CONCLUSION

It is difficult to foresee that anything approaching the Program observed in these Pilot Schools can be replicated citywide by schools' opening in September of 1975. Since most of the Pilot Schools already had a well-trained, dedicated, bilingual staff and were able to strengthen an existing program with an additional allocation of funds, they had advantages which schools starting in September will not necessarily enjoy. The problems facing other schools, such as a shortage of bilingual staff, a dearth of appropriate instructional materials, the absence of clear-cut curricular guides and the financial crisis in New York City which will affect funding for bilingual education, will inevitably jeopardize the full implementation of the Program. The expense budget adopted by the Board of Estimate and the City Council represented, according to the Board of Education, close to a quarter of a billion dollar cut in the level of educational services. It is unlikely that bilingual education will be spared in the cuts imposed on community school districts' expenditures.

Under these circumstances it is essential that good faith efforts be made by the Central Board of Education to: (a) collect and assess curricular plans and materials developed in the Pilot Schools, (b) to disseminate widely those which are judged effective, (c) to initiate an intensive training program for teachers who will be expected to implement the Program in the coming year, and (d) to commit a major portion of the special Federal and State funding for textbook acquisition to the purchase of textbooks and reading materials appropriate to the program of bilingual education.

Bilingual education should be given every chance to prove its efficacy as a viable method of reaching children whose difficulty with the English language has impeded their progress in school. The Program must have priority status in every district where the pupils who have been identified as needing this opportunity are enrolled.

REFERENCES

1. Aspira v. Board of Education, 72 Civ. 4002, U.S.D.Ct., S.D.N.Y., Consent Decree, entered August 29, 1974, p. 4.

2. Ibid., p. 2.

3. Ibid., p. 4.

4. Ibid., p. 7.

5. Aspira case supra, Memorandum and Order on Motion to Vacate Judgment, July 11, 1975, p. 5.

6. Committee on Education, Community Service Society of New York, Report on Bilingual Education, (1974), p. viii.

7. Board of Education, Office of the Chancellor, Special Circular No. 2. 1975-1976, July 21, 1975, p. 1.

8. Aspira case supra, Consent Decree, p. 6.

9. Education Law 3204:2

10. Aspira case supra, Memorandum on Testing Procedures, May 28, 1975, p. 9.

11. Ibid., pp. 10-11.

12. Aspira case supra, Memorandum and Order on Motion to Vacate Judgment, pp. 3-4 .

13. Ibid., p. 6, quoting Report on Bilingual Education (Community Service Society), p. viii.

14. Ibid., p. 7.

APPENDIX A

BILINGUAL PILOT SCHOOL STUDY GUIDE

SCHOOL _____ ADDRESS _____

DISTRICT _____ PHONE _____

TOTAL ENROLIMENT _____ DATE OF VISIT _____

OBSERVERS _____

1) Criteria used for assignment of students to bilingual program _____

_____

_____

2) Number of students in the program: _____

3) Are students tested for English language proficiency? YES____, NO_____

4) Spanish language proficiency? YES____, NO_____

5) Are students tested in order to assess their subject area proficiency in:

a) English? Yes____, No_____

b) Spanish? Yes____, No_____

6) How much time do students in the program spend in:

a) English language instruction? _____

b) Spanish language instruction? _____

7) Has there been any parent opposition to the students' assignment to a bilingual class?

YES____, NO_____

8) Were parents advised about the program plans and goals? YES____, NO_____

9) Is the teacher a native speaker of Spanish? YES____, NO____

10) Is the teacher fluent in Spanish? YES____, NO____

11) Is Spanish spoken by the teacher: Excellent___, Good____, Fair____, Poor____

12) Is teacher a native speaker of English? YES____, NO____

13) If no, is his/her English: Excellent____, Good____, Fair____, Poor____

14) Is English language instruction conducted by an E.S.L. teacher? YES___,NO___

15) Is there a bicultural component in the curriculum? YES____, NO____

a) If yes, how is it incorporated in the curriculum? _____

_____

16) What model is used in the organizational structure of your bilingual program?

a) Bilingual Mini-school _____
b) Non-graded classes _____
c) Graded classes _____
d) Bilingual school _____

17) What is the student-teacher ratio? _____

18) Are there any paraprofessionals in the classrooms? YES____, NO____

If yes, how are they utilized? _____

_____

19) Are the paraprofessionals English or Spanish dominant? _____

20) Are paraprofessionals assigned to teach part of the instructional time in Spanish? YES____, NO____

If yes, how many students are assigned to each group? _____

21) Are the paraprofessionals attending college? YES____, NO____

If yes, are they in a career ladder program? YES____, NO____

22) In what language are the following subjects conducted?

Math_____, Science_____, Social Studies_____

Music_____, Art_____, Health Educ._____

23) If professionally trained to make such a judgment, how would you rate the quality of subject matter instruction given in Spanish?

Excellent_____, Good_____, Fair_____, Poor_____

24) What provisions have been built into the program in order to avoid segregation and/or isolation of the bilingual students from their peers?

_____

25) In the classroom teacher's judgment, what is the quality of the material utilized in the bilingual classroom?

Excellent_____, Good_____, Fair_____, Poor_____

26) Is the material commercial? YES_____, NO_____

27) Are textbooks available in both languages? YES_____, NO_____

If no, please explain _____

_____

28) Is any material prepared by the teachers in the program? YES____,NO____

29) Is the library adequately supplied with books in both languages? YES___,NO__

If no, please explain _____

30) Are there sufficient texts and other learning materials for all the pupils in the program? YES_____, NO_____

If no, please explain _____

31) Do parents participate in the process of material selection? YES____, NO____

Please explain _____

32) Do parents participate in curriculum planning and development? YES____,NO___

_____

_____

33) Are parents participating as volunteers in the classroom? YES____, NO____

34) Is there a staff development program? YES____, NO____

How, and by whom was staff trained for the program? _____

_____

35) How was this school selected for the pilot program? _____

_____

36) Does the school have a bilingual resource staff? YES____, NO____

37) Was the school staff involved in program development and planning? YES__,NO__

If yes, how? _____

38) What instruments will be used to measure the pupils' achievement?

_____

_____

Will these be administered in English? YES____, NO____

in Spanish? YES____, NO____

39) For how long is it anticipated that students will remain in the bilingual program?

_____

40) How will the program be evaluated? _____

_____ By whom? _____

41) How is the program funded?

a) Title I _____

b) Title VII _____

c) Other Federal funds _____ (Please specify) _____

d) Tax Levy _____

e) State aid _____

Appendix B

Letter to Parent to be in English and in Spanish.

June , 1975

Dear Parent:

Your child _____, has been identified for an educational program designed to help him/her succeed in school. This program is intended to strengthen English language abilities while providing instruction in areas such as mathematics, science, and social studies in Spanish and to continue the development of Spanish language abilities. In addition, in order to avoid isolation and segregation from his schoolmates, opportunity will be provided for your child to spend maximum time with other pupils.

We are looking forward to having your child in this program. Should you have any questions about it, please contact the school to arrange for an opportunity to discuss the matter with me and/or my representative(s).

Sincerely yours,

Principal